DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 500 SP 032 727

AUTHOR Didham, Cheryl K.; Roush, Mary Lou
TITLE A Team Approach to Preparing Cooperating Teachers.
PUB DATE Aug 90
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Summer Workshop of the Association of Teacher Educators (Towson, MD, August 5-8, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperating Teachers; Course Descriptions; Elementary Secondary Education; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Improvement Programs; *Inservice Teacher Education; State Standards; *Student Teaching; *Training Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio State University

ABSTRACT

To meet Ohio state standards, Ohio State University offers an inservice education course for cooperating teachers. During sessions of the course, students and teachers learn together and practice their communication and conferencing skills. The course includes opportunities for teachers to try reflective teaching exercises. Topics assigned for the course include roles and responsibilities, supervisory styles, discussion on state standards, observation instruments that could be used to gather objective data, and writing mid-term and final evaluations. The teachers are also required to complete a project that would be useful to their school and/or to any field experience student assigned there. Projects range from video tapes to school handbooks. (19 references) (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED326500

A Team Approach to Preparing Cooperating Teachers

Cheryl K. Didham
Assistant Professor/Coordinator of Field Experiences
The Ohio State University at Lima
Lima, Ohio 45804

Mary Lou Roush
Instructor
The Ohio State University at Lima
Lima, Ohio 45804

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. K. Didham

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A paper presented at ATE Summer Workshop
Towson State University
Towson, Maryland
August 5-8, 1990

SP 032 727

ABSTRACT

A TEAM APPROACH TO PREPARING COOPERATING TEACHERS

Cheryl K. Didham
Mary Lou Roush

Ohio's state standards call for "selecting, orienting and providing inservice education for those cooperating teachers...who work with teacher education field experience students." To meet this state standard The Ohio State University offers a graduate course entitled "Directing Student Teachers" which can be partially paid by fee waivers earned by having field experience students in their classrooms.

The course was restructured at the Lima Campus to include attendance of spring 1990 student teachers at several of the classes. During these sessions, students and teachers learned together and practiced their skills of communication and conferencing. The course included opportunities for teachers to try reflective teaching exercises, something all OSU students practice throughout their professional courses. Besides covering supervision styles, observation techniques, and conferencing and evaluation, among other topics, teachers were required to complete a project that would be useful to their school and/or any field experience student assigned there. Projects ranged from video tapes to school handbooks and showed thought and creativity.

The eventual goal in Ohio is for all cooperating teachers to complete at least one course or seminar dealing with supervision of field experience students. Courses specifically designed to include student teachers as well as teach pertinent skills needed by cooperating teachers work well for OSU. The ultimate goal for our college is to provide quality experiences with quality teachers for all our education majors.

Anyone developing a course on the supervision of field experiences could be overwhelmed by the amount of literature written on the topic and by the various findings. Articles pertaining to field experiences, supervision, the cooperating teacher, and student teachers abound.

A quick look at the history of education confirms the fact that student teaching has always been high on the list of requirements for a teaching certificate, ranging at normal schools during the 1800's from two to twenty weeks (AATC Yearbook, 1927). During the late 1800's the NEA had eight committees dealing with teacher education, one of which dealt specifically with student teaching (Assoc. for Student Teaching, 1962).

As normal schools gave way to colleges of education and accreditation organizations such as AATC and NCATE developed procedures and standards, student teaching became a requirement for all education majors. However, criticisms of the quality of the experience and the supervision have been heard in the last several decades. The focus of needed improvement was usually on the methods courses taught, the length of the experience or the quality of the supervision by the university. More recently, colleges of education have come to focus on the cooperating teacher and the qualities and training needed to work successfully with a pre-service teacher (Kingsen, 1984).

One of the State Standards in Ohio requires that more attention be focused on the cooperating teacher assigned to work with the student teacher. Colleges must now provide procedures "for selecting, orienting and providing inservice education for those cooperating teachers and college or university faculty who work with teacher education field experience students" (State of Ohio, 1985).

Many Ohio Colleges and Universities have provided orientations for

cooperating teachers (usually only a one or two hour meeting) and those with graduate schools have had some type of course geared to the cooperating teacher which offered graduate credit. The Ohio State University is no exception and has long offered such a course, mostly taken by graduate students assigned to supervise various field experience students. With tuition waivers available at some of OSU's campuses, and the new state requirement, area teachers now have a greater incentive to enroll in this course.

Topics previously covered in the course included background and theory of supervision, roles and responsibilities of the cooperating teacher, supervisory paradigms, observation techniques, conferencing, evaluation, and legal aspects of student teaching. The main purpose for changing the structure of the course this past year was to meet the needs of the prospective cooperating teachers from area schools. Unlike fulltime graduate students, teachers in the Lima area had little contact with other teachers in the course and found access to the library rather difficult. What they really wanted was help in working with their student teachers or field experience students and the opportunity to share their frustrations and successes with others.

The topics assigned for this spring class included those previously taught: roles and responsibilities, supervisory styles, conferencing, and evaluation. Additional topics added were: discussion on the state standards, observation instruments that could be used to gather objective data, and writing mid-term and final evaluations. One area superintendent was invited to the class to read some of the sample evaluations the teachers had written and to comment on his interpretation of the meaning (or hidden meaning) of each.

Two major changes were made in the course. Since Ohio State

University is known for its use of reflective teaching (Cruickshank, 1987), all OSU education majors participate in reflective teaching exercises prior to taking methods courses. Many cooperating teachers are not OSU graduates and it was felt that allowing them to experience the same activities as their assigned student would be useful in their understanding of reflective teaching and the philosophy of OSU. These exercises are done in small groups where each student takes a turn at teaching a fifteen minute lesson followed by small group discussion and then large group discussion. Because of the number of teachers and the time limits, five groups were formed and two teachers from each group were chosen to teach an assigned lesson ranging from Chisanbop (Sensory Motor Domain), to Magic Squares (Cognitive Domain). The experience helped the teachers to understand the process of reflective teaching and aided them in guiding their student teachers as they used it in their practice teaching.

Another new feature of the class was the opportunity for the student teachers to attend. The original intent was to have the majority of the spring quarter cooperating teachers take the class and work directly with their own student teachers. As it turned out, so many other teachers wanted to enroll, those without student teachers outnumbered those with student teachers. All student teachers from spring quarter and even previous quarters were invited to one of the classes about midway through the term. Refreshments were served and the hours of the class were changed to accommodate the student teachers.

Once everyone was acquainted, the class was divided into triads with one student teacher to a group and the other members playing the role of cooperating teacher or university supervisor. Each triad role-played an assigned situation such as a midterm conference where the student teacher was having difficulty in lesson planning. Situations ranged from problem

student teachers to outstanding student teachers. A video tape was made of two groups who were conferencing with an outstanding student teacher, which may appear to be the easiest type of conference but often it is not. The teachers enjoyed getting immediate feedback from the students and hearing how they would react in a given situation. The students enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the teachers and presented some different views (or excuses) for their behavior in each simulated situation. At the close of the session the student teachers were given the opportunity to share some of their views from their student teaching experiences. All agreed that working together was by far the best experience possible.

The ideal class would be to have the student teachers available to meet with the class four or five times a quarter. This would only be possible if their seminars fell on the same night as the class and their supervisors were willing to give up some of their own time with the student teachers. It is unfair to ask the student teachers to come to the university an additional four or five times when they are busy and under stress to complete all their assignments for the quarter. With only ten weeks available, any additional meetings are an inconvenience for them. However, by planning ahead and working out a schedule with the university supervisors, several meetings could be planned. Both the cooperating teachers (those with students assigned and those without) and the student teachers felt that the additional time together was very valuable. Even when some of the students were paired with a teacher they did not know, the experience was useful. Sometimes it is easier for them to discuss their situation and problems with a third party, such as an experienced teacher, but one with whom they are not working directly.

In designing this cooperative part of the course it is important to prepare for the meeting of student and cooperating teacher. If possible, a

panel of past student teachers should be brought in to share their experiences. These students would be able to talk freely and not be in a position to fear repercussions from a teacher who was not in agreement with them. In the Lima area, there are many graduates who are substituting and are eager to return and share their past problems and triumphs of student teaching.

Secondly, at least one class should be devoted to conferencing skills. Many useful articles and manuals are available that deal with supervision styles and how to conference with the problem student teacher or the excellent student teacher (Henry and Beasley, 1982). Viewing video tapes (Conferencing with Student Teachers, 1989), or role playing can prepare the teachers for conferences with the student teachers as they together role-play and discuss different situations.

Communication: Caught or Taught?

Communication is extremely important for a successful student teaching experience. Both parties need to feel free to approach the other when there are concerns or problems. Quality supervision is adjusting the ingredients to the right proportions. It's a matter of continually approaching or working toward whatever the goal might be. Forming a perfect relationship with the student teacher may be impossible to achieve, but a successful relationship where both can work together cooperatively, is the goal in making a quality experience for the student and the teacher. The answer to whether the ingredients to communication are caught or taught seems to fit both modes. Achieving a solid communication base is a complex and a challenging goal to which there is joy and satisfaction in achieving this quest.

Conferencing:

The daily conference is useful in keeping open the lines of

communication. While these can be held at any time it is sometimes best to set aside a particular time of the day to meet. Before school starts or immediately after school each day usually works well. Lesson plans can be reviewed and changes in the schedule discussed. Student and teacher will begin to work as a team as the communication continues through the quarter or semester.

About once a week it is wise to hold a more formal conference with the student teacher to discuss any problems or activities that they need to focus on in the future. The classroom teacher should provide the following to help facilitate these conferences:

1. Establish a positive tone.
2. Always have a specific agenda or topic to focus on at the conferencing time.
3. Set a time limit for the conference and start promptly.
4. Stay on task, discuss the topic(s) on the agenda.
5. Don't allow interruptions unless they are urgent.
6. Make sure the place you meet is comfortable.
7. Have at least one specific goal for the student teacher to focus on for the next day.
8. Keep comments to the point.
9. Use constructive comments and provide time for both to discuss issues.
10. Summarize the content of the conference and make sure all points are clear to both parties.

It is usually advised to begin a conference on a positive note. No matter what the student teacher has done there are probably several good points that you can praise. The cooperating teacher should stay in control of the conference and be sure to summarize what took place. There should be a

mutual understanding of what is to come next for both parties.

Using Reflection

Reflective teaching demonstrations and reflective writing in journals are two other pertinent ways to help student teachers and field experience students focus on the day-to-day events with the classroom. Not only do OSU freshmen observers keep journals, but the students they teach do as well. One Freshman Early Experience student taught a fifth grader who succeeded in expressing herself poetically in her first week's journal:

"Confused"

I only have two hands is really very true
I also found out that two is very few
My mind gets so puzzled, I can't even think
Sometimes I feel like I'm really going to sink.
So if this ever happens you really must just stop
'Cause if you don't you're going to really blow
your top. (Stacy Seiling, Maplewood Elementary School)

Important Characteristics of Education Majors

After working with the Freshman Early Experience Program (FEEP) at OSU for a number of years, certain valuable traits surfaced: trust, self-esteem, respect, understanding, humility, flexibility, generosity, tolerance, cooperativeness, and a healthy pride in oneself. FEEP students cited these traits as important on the job, in the community, and throughout life.

The field experience students' philosophy is crucial as it touches every nook and cranny of their teaching. Their true philosophy both generates and embraces their values. A direct conflict in values can seriously jeopardize the field experience and a student teacher's success.

Yet one's values are to some extent always in flux. They are always being challenged and tested by our students and our changing world, or more particularly by any maturing of the student teacher or cooperating teacher.

Ideally, one's values and traits are harmonious within their field

experience setting. Hopefully, the teacher and supervisor help reinforce the field experience and student teacher's respective values.

Communication is the bond that develops resilience and trust. Field experiences and student teaching are often the pivotal parts to successful communication at OSU. This skill can be taught and improved upon, and most cooperating teachers are eager and willing to partake in experiences that will expand their expertise and help them work with prospective teachers.

One quarter (ten classes) is a short period of time to cover everything necessary to become a good cooperating teacher. One can only hope that the sessions stimulated and enticed the teachers to continue to grow and reflect upon their work with various levels of field experience students.

Because all graduate courses must require some type of paper or project to encourage reading, research, and synthesis, this course tried to stimulate teachers to develop a project that would be useful to them, their school and the field experience students whom they might have. The list of possible projects included: a video tape of a particular teaching skill, a video taped demonstration of a good lesson and/or poor lesson, a video tape of a conference with a student teacher (either excellent or weak), a handbook for your school which includes everything a student teacher needs to know about the school or your class, an open letter to a student teacher, an annotated bibliography of research on cooperating or student teachers for the last five years, or any other projects that would be pertinent to the student teacher or field experience student.

The finished projects were creative and very useful. The teachers enjoyed the assignment and found that they put more time and energy into the projects because each would be used by others. The handbooks that were completed were very professional looking and the video tapes would be useful in various field experience classes.

Because the goal of OSU is to have all cooperating teachers complete this course, the first class at the Lima Campus was singled out as "Charter Members." Each class member received a certificate and a large, round, three inch decal that could be placed on their classroom doors stating that they were "official" OSU cooperating teachers. As a final thank-you, each teacher was given a copy of a paperback book tracing the history of the OSU-Lima Campus.

Providing good experiences with quality teachers for all our education majors is the goal of OSU. By offering graduate level courses specifically for cooperating teachers, perhaps this goal can be reached. At the Lima Campus we are certainly off to a good start.

Bibliography

American Association of Teachers Colleges (1927). Yearbook, Oneonta, New York: The Association.

Association for Student Teaching (1962). The Outlook in Student Teaching, Dubuque, Iowa: The Association.

Cruickshank, D. R. (1987). Reflective Teaching: The Preparation of Students of Teaching. Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Educators.

Henry, M. A. and Beasley, W. W. (1982). Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 3rd. ed. Terre Haute, Indiana: Sycamore Press.

Kingsen, S. (1984). Does the left hand really know what the right hand in doing? An informal look at the selection and evaluation of cooperating teachers. The Teacher Educators, 20, 2-13.

State of Ohio, State Board of Education. Teacher Education and Certification Standards, Administrative Code, Chapters 3301-21 and 3301-23. As adopted December 14, 1985.

Articles Used in OSU Course -- Directing Student Teachers

Beachamp, L., (1983). Cooperating and student teacher expectations: beefs and bouquets. The Teacher Educator, 19 (1), 2-6.

Conferencing with Student Teachers (1989). Video tape and manual, developed by: Office of Professional Education Services. The Teachers College, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas.

Cruickshank, Donald R., (1987). Reflective teaching, the preparation of students of teaching. Virginia: ATE.

Defelice, Louise, (1989). The bibbiibobbidiboo factor in teaching. Phi Delta Kappan, April, 639-641.

Evans, Ellis D., andd Tribble, Margaret, (1986). Perceived teaching problems, self-efficacy, and commitment to teaching among preservice teachers. Journal of Educational Research, 80, 81-85.

Glickman, Carl D., (1981). Developmental supervision: alternative practices for helping teachers improve instruction. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Henry, M. A. and Beasley, W. W., (1982). Supervising student teachers the professional way. Indiana: Sycamore Press.

Houston, R. W., (1988). Reflecting on reflection in teacher education. In Waxman, Freiberg, Vaughan, and Weil (Eds.). Images of reflection, (pp. 7-8). Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Education.

Phelps, Le Adelle, Schmitz, Charles D., and Wade, Debrah Lee, (1986). A performance-based cooperating teacher report. Journal of Teacher Education, 37, 32-35.

Ross, Dorene D., (1988). Reflective teaching: meaning and implications for pre-service teacher educators. In Waxman, Freiberg, Vaughan, and Weil (Eds.). Images of reflection. (pp. 25-26). Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Education.

Seeing is believing: Supervision of teaching by means of video tape. (1988). Action in Teacher Education, 10, 47-49.

Stout, Candace, (1982). Why cooperating teachers accept students. Journal of Teacher Education, 33, 22-24.

Volker, Roger, (1988). Methods for fostering teacher education students' reflective analysis of research on teaching. In Waxman, Freiberg, Vaughan, and Weil (Eds.). Images of Reflection, (pp. 32-33). Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Education.